

Wilton Brand Survey Results

Wilton Economic Development Team

July 6, 2017

Background

A key element of any town's economic development effort is to determine the best way to market the town in order to attract new residents, businesses, and customers for its existing businesses. Developing the town "brand" or market positioning requires understanding how it compares and competes with surrounding towns, what its unique attributes are, and what existing residents and businesses most value about the town. It is not just about developing a slogan or tag-line (although that might be one outcome) – it is about creating a timeless and authentic story that sets the tone for other marketing and builds awareness for our target audiences.

In Wilton, many efforts to do brand positioning over the years have resulted in interesting data, but suffered from a lack of follow-through. The current Wilton Economic Development Team wants to ensure that this time the work results in real follow-up and execution.

To date, a number of mechanisms have been used to start to collect data – results from all of these can be found on the Economic Development page on the town website:

- We worked with UNH to execute the Business Retention and Expansion Program and interview Wilton businesses on what the town needs to be doing to provide a better business climate which will help them grow.
- At Town Hall on Election Day we conducted an informal poll which enabled people to "vote" on which of 6 economic development options they would most like to see in town.
- We are partnering with Plan NH on a design charrette around the future of the downtown village area, which will include two public input sessions.
- Finally, an online brand survey was designed to more specifically gather input on how residents believe we should best market and differentiate Wilton, and what makes it a special place!

The rest of this report summarizes the results from this brand survey. If you have any further questions or input, feel free to send an e-mail to ecodev@wilton.org.

Survey Methodology

A 10-question survey was launched online via Survey Monkey on May 27, 2017 and remained open until June 30, 2017. All-told we had **191 completed surveys**, the vast majority of whom answered all the questions. The survey was anonymous, but garnered 27 new e-mail addresses which were added to our database.

We distributed and promoted the survey in the following ways:

- The survey link was distributed via e-mail to 278 names on the Economic Development interest list.
- The survey link was posted on the Merchants and Residents of Wilton's Facebook page, where it was accessed and also shared by people via their own Facebook pages.
- Town Administrator Scott Butcher sent an e-mail to all town employees and board/committee members requesting they participate,
- A link to the survey was placed on the home page of the Town of Wilton website and on the Economic Development Team page.
- Economic Development Team members sent personal emails to their friends and neighbors.

Summary of Key Findings

- The words most often used to describe Wilton are: small, rural, quaint, quiet, a charming New England town.
- These views of Wilton are reinforced in the perceived advantages versus Milford, which include being smaller, quieter, more rural, with less people and traffic. These are also mentioned as advantages versus Peterborough, but the biggest advantage is being closer to the highway with faster access to Nashua and Manchester.
- People chose to live in Wilton for many reasons, including family ties, work, and the Waldorf schools. Often mentioned were the rural and small town character, and more affordable homes and land.
- Respondents' views of the people most likely to want to live in Wilton are artists, families with small children and empty-nesters.
- The things Wilton has to be most proud of include our rural character and small town charm, friendly people, conservation land and recreation opportunities, historic attractions (Town Hall Theater, Frye's Measure Mill, Andy's Playhouse), the Library and the Waldorf schools
- The consensus on the most desirable businesses to add to downtown are a dinner restaurant, pub/tavern, grocery store, bakery and coffee shop.
- In summing up Wilton in a single image most people mention the Town Hall, the Library, Main Street, the river and the falls.

Favorite quote:

"Life in Wilton can be whatever you want. Slow your life down, go fishing with your kids, walk through downtown and get greeted by your neighbors. This town has the strongest sense of community that I've ever seen. People in this town are so quick to support in-town businesses if their neighbor is needed. It's a wonderful refreshing change. We love Wilton and I love my neighbors."

Other Findings

- Based on free-form comments, 88% of respondents are positive and optimistic about Wilton and its future, while 12% view its current state (and future potential) quite negatively.
- We should not discount the positive effect that small improvements on Main Street can have on how people view the town. There were a total of 28 comments that related in some way to the need to spruce-up Main Street and the road leading into town, including improving the façade of the post office (bringing back the original look), getting rid of the “junk store”, preventing future conversions of businesses to private residences, and in general improving the look of the buildings.
- Peoples’ perception of Wilton’s property taxes versus surrounding towns do not match reality. There were a number of specific comments that “Wilton has higher property taxes than Milford” or “Our taxes are preposterous!” and “A competitive advantage is definitely not lower taxes.” While 83-85% do not think Wilton has an advantage versus Milford or Peterborough in terms of property taxes, for 2016 Wilton’s tax rate was 9% lower than Milford’s and 15% lower than Peterborough’s.
- Another theme that ran through the comments is the issue of “separateness” or the lack of a feeling that it is “one Wilton” -- old vs newer residents, Waldorf “crowd” versus everyone else, and no cohesiveness or signage that ties the different neighborhoods together, particularly downtown with Wilton Center, West Wilton and Davisville.

Possible Brand Positioning Statements

Based on some verbatim suggestions provided in the survey, as well as some possibilities which incorporate many of the ideas expressed, here are some possible ways we could position the town:

Wilton: *Traditional Small Town Living*

Wilton: *A Modern Rural Village*

Wilton: *A Modern Village with a Small-Town Feel*

Wilton: *A Modern Village with a Small-Town Vibe*

Wilton: *A Village with Heart and Soul*

Wilton: *Where Traditions Meet the Modern World*

Wilton: *Where the Hills Begin*

Wilton: *Gateway to the Monadnock Region*

Naturally Wilton

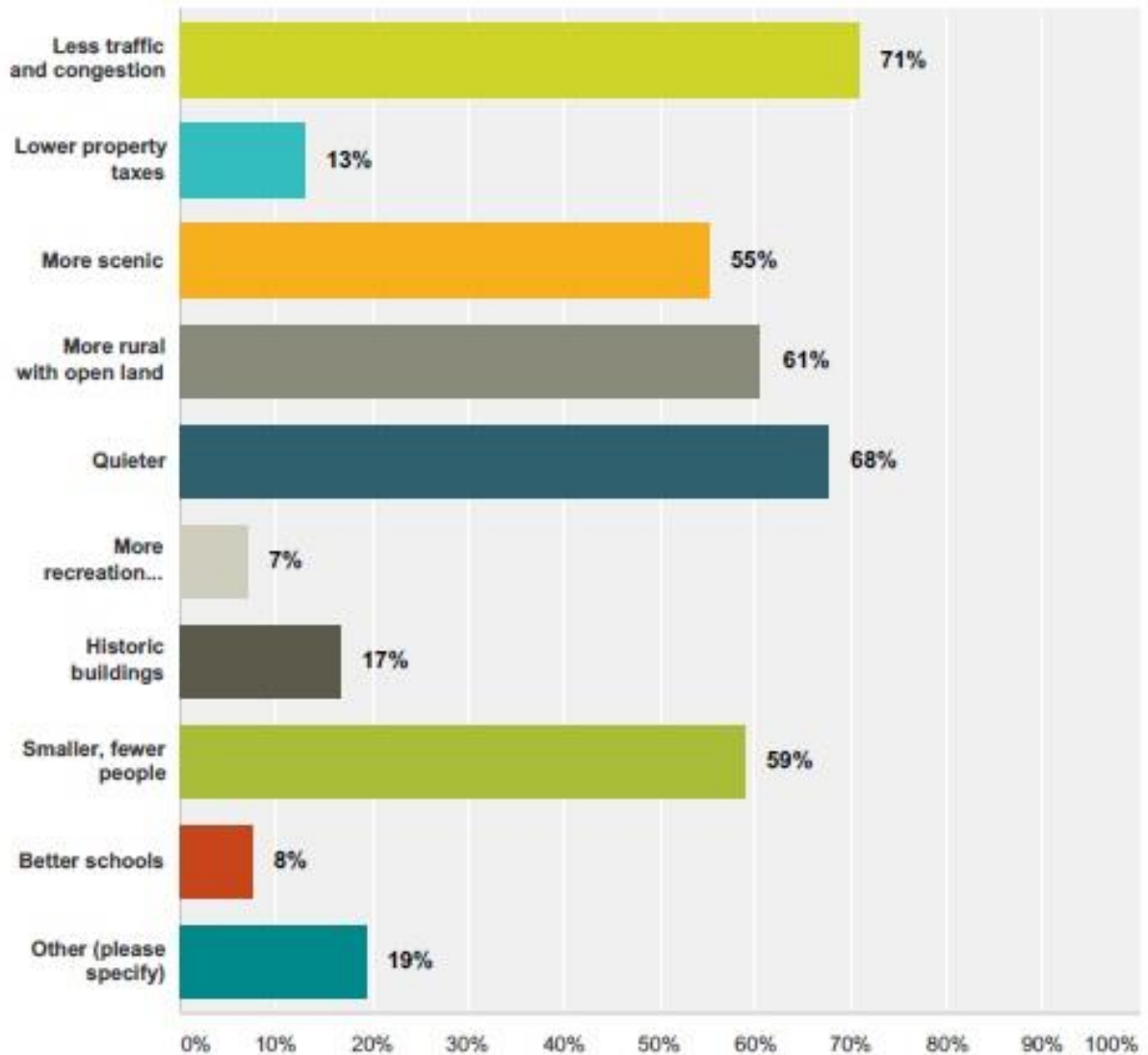
Wilton, Naturally!

Enjoy the Nature of Wilton

Wilton in the Wild

Q1 What are the major advantages Wilton has versus Milford as a place to live, work or run a business.

Answered: 185 Skipped: 6

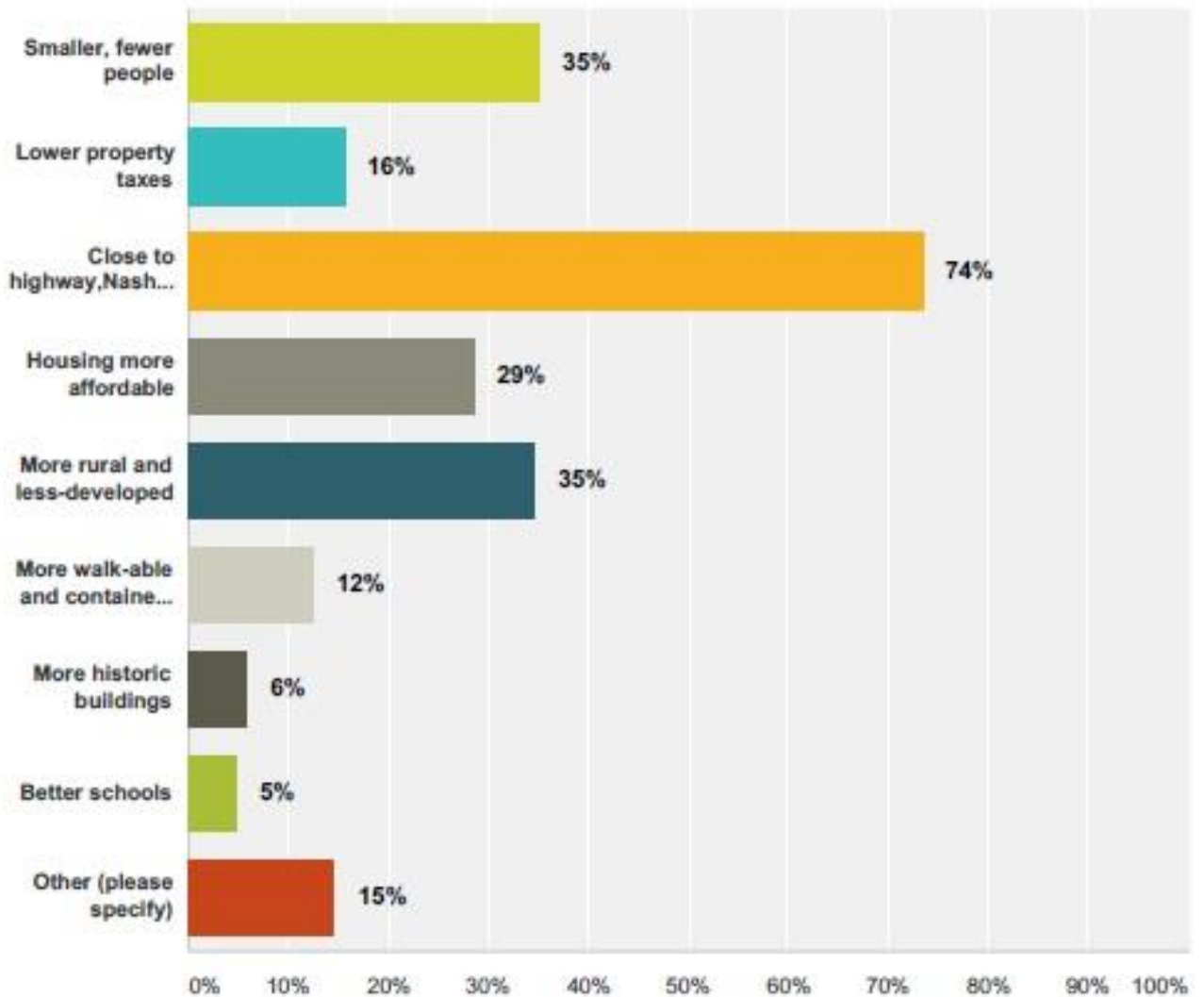


Q1: Other Responses

Fewer criminals
Wilton is not plagued with poor quality, ugly retail centers and used car dealerships. Milford is the poster child for bad zoning and poor planning, having grown up there and knowing what it was and what it has become is disheartening. Wilton should study what Milford did and learn from their huge mistakes.
Ha! Our taxes are preposterous! Awful!
Great elementary school
Smaller schools which meet the needs of all students
A great library, with very personal service, great staff and programs.
Our fantastic library
Different kind of schools public as well as the Waldorf schools. Mixed socio-economic classes and cultures.
No big box stores, no national chain stores, no malls of any kind! Interesting people.
Reflects the reasons I moved to the "country" - charm, gentle people. It's a place "where everyone knows your name."
Wilton has higher property taxes then Milford!!!
Schools are good here, just don't know how they compare
Town Hall Theater
Definitely not lower taxes. They will drive us out of Wilton eventually
Wilton doesn't really compare. There are not a lot of places to work. Many of the roads with homes are still dirt and not in the greatest condition. Main street is not a great place to visit its old and the retail availability is limited.
High Mowing, Pine Hill, Temple-Wilton community Farm - the oldest CSA in the country, Hilltop cafe - farm to table restaurant
High Mowing and Pine Hill add cultural value that Milford lacks.
Milford's zoning looks like a mess. industry next to residential next to commercial
They don't keep destroying old homes to put up new stores that nobody needs.
Artist community
Cheaper housing. No advantages for a business to operate.
Farmland
Greater sense of community
Access to Natural world
If someone wants "rural with open land" + open skies, views, otherwise the trade-off on so many other advantages is discouraging.
High Mowing School and Pine Hill Waldorf School, Temple Wilton Community Farm, Hilltop Cafe, Sky Bridge
None
Would never emphasize our public schools...we moved here despite them
Diversity of cultural interests amongst the residents.
Friendly people
Wilton is a safe haven for us all!

Q2 What are the major advantages Wilton has versus Peterborough as a place to live, work or run a business?

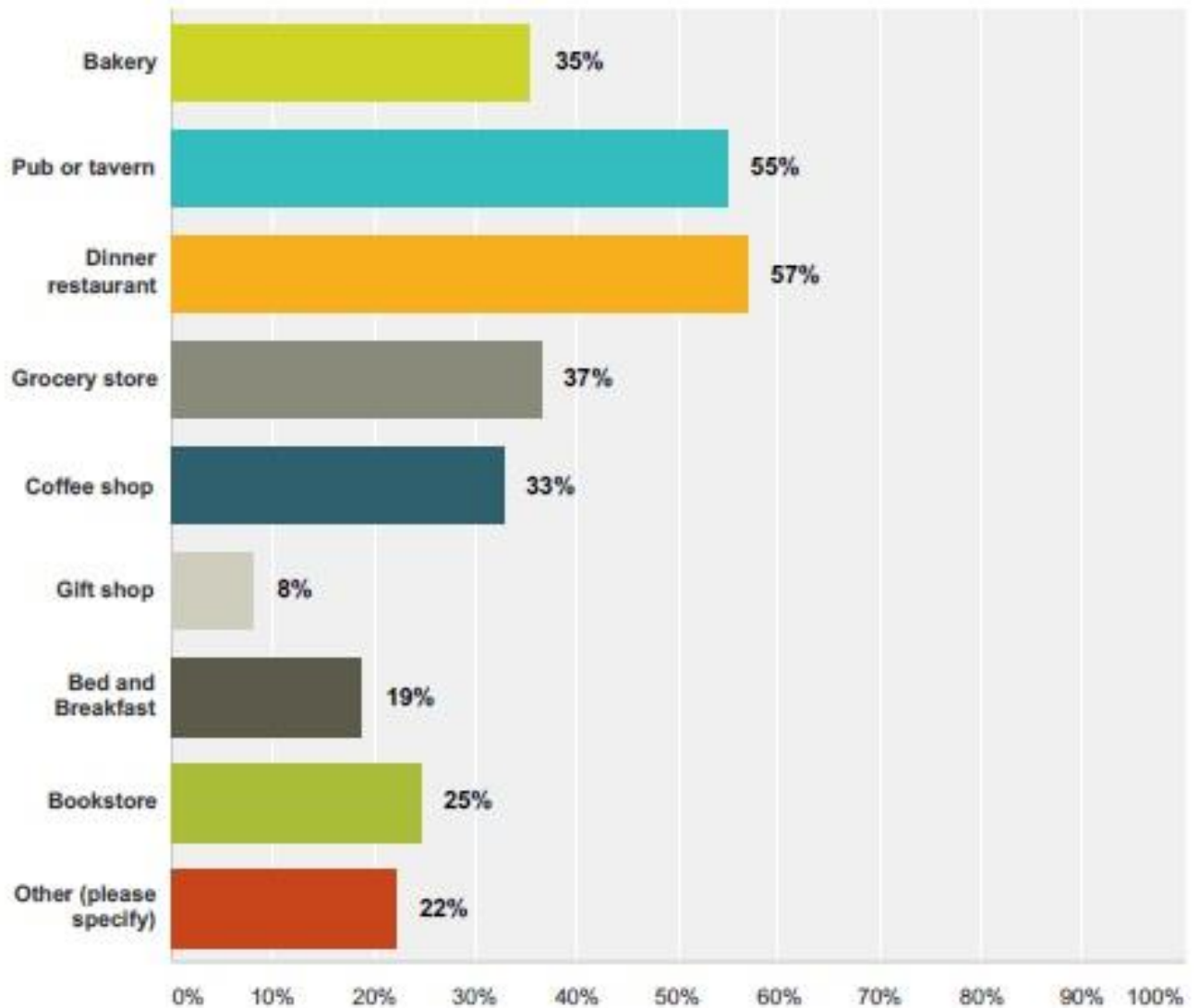
Answered: 185 Skipped: 6



Q2. Other Responses
Unfortunately Peterborough has better schools and nicer downtown area to visit
Wilton should look more to Peterborough then to Milford for its examples of how to advance the town.
About taxes.....no services!!!! Correct side of mountain.
Town Hall Theater
A fabulous, active library
More welcoming to a variety of socio-economic groups of people.
Incredible movie theater!
Overall, more interesting
Art / Yoga Colony at Riverview Mills
Town Hall Theater
Same as comparison with Milford.
Closer to the airport, and to Boston
Not a whole lot
I don't see any advantages.
It is nowhere as nice as Peterborough
Affordable housing and public transportation are the top problems
No work advantage
Pine Hill and High Mowing
If downtown is developed as suggested Wilton will be a better town. But we need restaurants, a general store, shops and the signs and storefronts look messy/tacky.
Not much
High Mowing School and Pine Hill Waldorf School, Temple Wilton Community Farm
Closer to Boston.
None.

Q3 Which of the following new businesses would you MOST like to see in Wilton?

Answered: 186 Skipped: 5



Q3. Other Responses
Five and dime
I would like to see an effort to attract professional, commercial and light industrial business to the town.
Wine bar
24 hour convenience store
Small local producers co-op
Food coop
Craft brewery
Newsstand
Some tech companies and a bank
Craft brewery
I would especially like to see a gastropub, or a wine cafe. Something to have a fancier lunch at, or a relaxed but nice dinner (not pizza)
A green co-op grocery store would be nice. A pub/tavern cafe combo that had live music and a place for the many creative artists to display their work. If Wilton had a dinner restaurant it would have to be very unique and not real expensive.
Art galleries; a space for theater, and live music
Businesses such as these come and go in Wilton. I believe that the community is better served by light manufacturing and such.
Food Co-op
Restaurant with a small simple menu, but with everything very fresh, organic if possible: like Hilltop Café!
Shops need to be open several evenings during the week. I work 8-5 and cannot shop downtown during those times
Anything as there is basically not much there after 5pm
Downtown specialty businesses
Old fashion country general store
Art gallery, specialty clothing stores, farmers markets, outdoor family concerts
Pizza/brew pub
Small tech companies since people can work from home; we have all of the above close enough
Health food store. I still miss Bursey's!
Convenience store
Drugstore
Something different that will bring people from surrounding towns into Wilton. I suggest target business that cater to natural products like natural foods, natural healing and outdoor products like hiking ,etc like an EMS type store
Arcade, roller skating...something to engage the kids. There is not a lot for the kids around this area.
Nice dress shop/bookstore/athletic groups
A unique business. Something that would help define the town. All other above are commodity businesses that will not draw outsiders.
Drug store

Micro Brewery / Distillery
Higher Learning School
General store
Drug store
Spiritual retreat and healing center
An old-fashioned "five & dime" store.
Equestrian Shop and Trader Joe's
Live music venue, Affordable artist live/work spaces, Organic, Biodynamic Produce Market
Nighttime restaurant
Mixed-use development

Q4 If you live in Wilton, why did you choose to settle here?

Answered: 157 Skipped: 34



Q4. If you live in Wilton, why did you choose to settle here?
Answered: 157 Skipped: 34
Less congestion than Nashua
Rural and scenic setting
Wanted to move from Nashua to somewhere more rural (but not too far), found an historic home in Wilton!
More house/property for your money
Large lot size, off of 101. Easy drive to Keene, Nashua, Manchester, and Concord.
It's home.
I don't live, but offer artists opportunities to come up during the summer period and enjoy the nature that Wilton has to offer, as well as the quick hops to places like Milford, Nashua and Peterborough. The support for the arts is palpable and the community is so generous. All of these professional artists, predominantly from urban lifestyles, tell us how they leave with a renewed appreciation of their art and craft and feel as though Wilton provides a sense of inspiration, peace, and support for their process in ways they can't find anywhere else.
Small town where I could know more people and be part of the community instead of just a face
Affordable & quiet
Affordable housing - Proximity to work
Historic setting
I have admired Wilton Center since I was a kid. The town is nice and not pretentious like some of our neighboring communities
Pine Hill
Charm
Pine Hill
Easy commute to Boston (at the time), much more rural than it is now
Rural and quiet
The feel of rural living with the advantages of suburban life (proximity to jobs, cities, airports...)
Quaint town, loved the town hall theatre and arts community
Rural brook in front yard
Lower house price
Where my spouse grew up
Lower real estate prices (1997), friendly people, and Mr. Putnam remembered my name after only 1 meeting.
Sense of community connections
Pine Hill and High Mowing School
Small town and quietness
It is an amazing Town with great residents.
Size of town, rural character, Catholic Church...but they CLOSED THAT!
Family and job
Small town atmosphere with reasonable access to towns with high tech jobs.
We have actively chosen not to move to Wilton. Internet connectivity is not adequate for my husband who works from home.
First affordable land west of Nashua

Came 1976 - rural setting but close to highways, larger cities
Because it is a beautiful rural area, not too developed, no chain stores, close enough to commute to Nashua and Manchester, easy access to 101.
I work at the Pine Hill Waldorf School
In the hills and not too far from my job in Nashua.
Found an apartment that felt like a house and would accept our large dog
We found the perfect property for us
Waldorf schools
Location
Have always lived here. Stayed because my parents are here and I need to be near them.
Rural, feels more like home when you see people you know, slower pace
Landed here by accident, stayed because of small town community
Grew up here
Rural - less developed
Small, unspoiled - farmland, orchards, gardens. NO heavy industry!! Sufficient businesses to help tax rate.
Rural setting away from suburbia
Reasonable distance to work in Nashua/Manchester
Love small towns - great place to raise family
Our house
Found a house here with low taxes
It is where one of us grew up, we have been here 45 years!
Lower housing cost
The Waldorf Schools, Pine Hill and High Mowing
House that we liked.
Moved from MA, enuff said
Because it feels like you live way out in the woods, but are actually really close to all modern conveniences.
Affordable, quiet, our little piece of paradise! School class sizes are small.
Real estate was more affordable in the 70's than in Nashua.
For High Mowing School
30 years ago it was the best choice. Now taxes are out of sight. Property assessments are unrealistic and services are lack
Cost of land and landscape
Right place as the time I chose to.....wasn't really aware not much existed
Rural character
My hometown
Rural surroundings close to major urban centers
Nice sense of community , recreation
Close to family.
Proximity to Pine Hill and High Mowing schools
First, it was the property, but now I've met people with close political views to my own
My husband's parents were living here...
Beautiful quiet historic community to develop an experience for visitors and guests

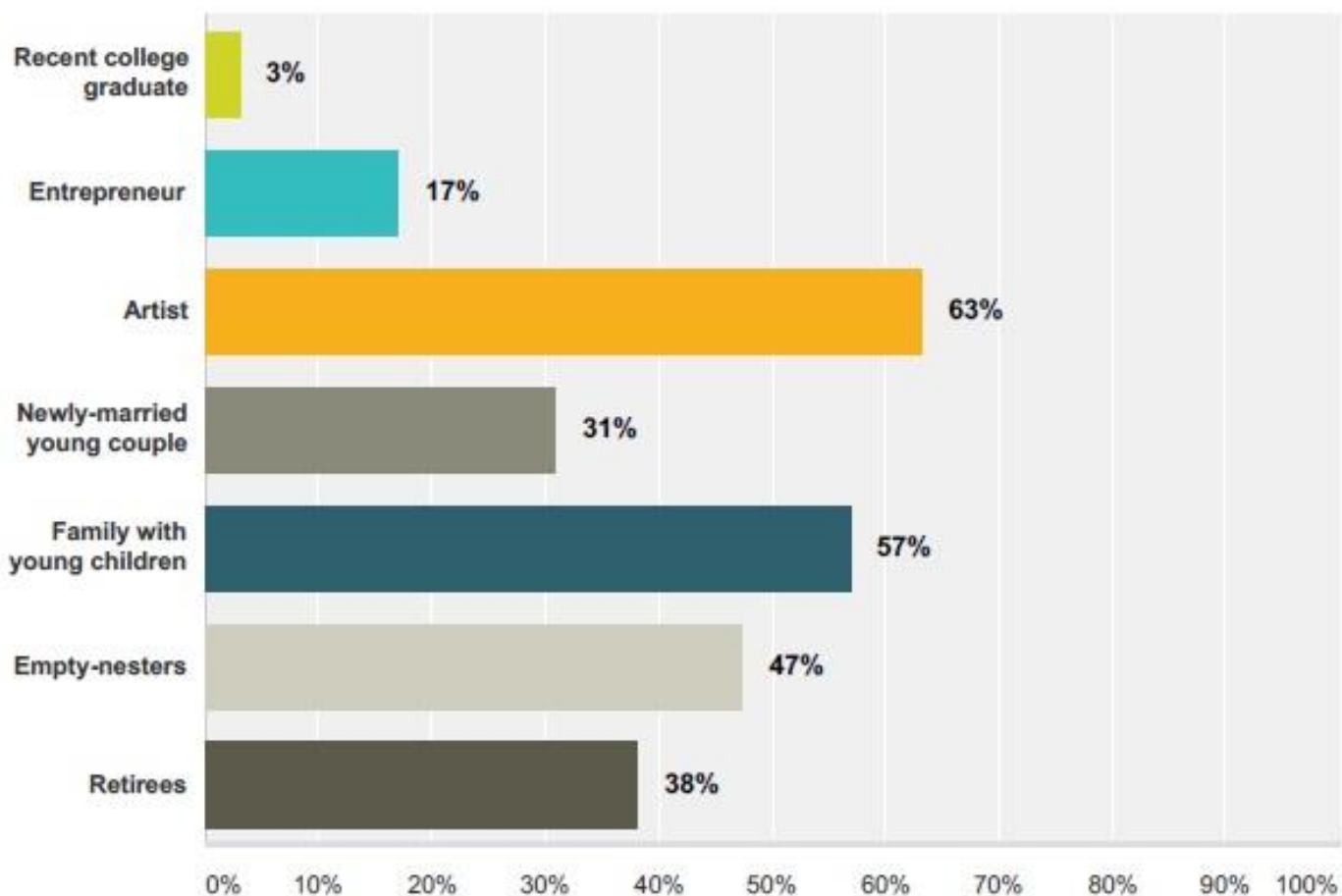
My house
Peace and quiet. Friendly town. Affordable. Rural and scenic.
The Waldorf Schools
Proximity to Pine Hill Waldorf School
Small town, small classes in the schools
Found a great and affordable house
Honestly...20 years ago I loved thought of living in Milford. But I stepped back and looked at potential growth. Now I'm so glad we didn't settle there! How many drug stores and auto parts stores does one town need??
We love the farmland.
The rural atmosphere.
Moved here for the particular house was not looking to live in Wilton
Waldorf Schools....we stay because of rural, small town life.
Quiet. People are SO friendly. It's getting away while still close to Nashua.
Love the small town, but still close to large towns for convenience
schools/ daycare
Beautiful views. Truly a small town.
Wanted out of the city scene, excellent school system
\$\$
Small town
Love nature and can hike in my backyard
I love the area, and the fishing.
Perfect balance between the quiet of the country and the perks of the city.
Found pet friendly rental for the right price, 20 years ago.
To get away from urban sprawl and all of the problems that come with it.
Family ties
Rent
Married a Wiltonite
More house/land for \$
Art and culture. Rural feel.
Quiet and remote at the time.
Close knit community
Good price on land and house in rural area
It's on the outskirts of Milford so it's out of the city but it's still a 15 min drive to Nashua
Lived here all my life.
Between New Ipswich and Bedford
Less expensive housing.
Small town, actually live in Lyndeborough, work in Wilton.
My family has been in Wilton for many, many years!
Rural area and proximity to Keene State
This town is a good commuter town for the Manchester & Nashua area. Plus it is quiet!
Natural beauty, Wilton-Temple Farm, conservation land, and small town amenities like Wilton Town Hall Theater and Nelsons.

I grew up here
Left Manchester after 40 years got sick of the city life
Affordable, quiet, and good school
Nice community, nature, open space
Waldorf schools, biodynamic farms
Move from MA for a quieter place to live and bring up kids
Price, location and church (at the time, but Sacred Heart is no more)
Pine Hill and High Mowing
Country living
My family is from this area
Family relocation due to job
Pretty country area to live in for us and our Lab. When we moved here there was a restaurant down town and a few cute shops. We were told that businesses were moving in, instead in 4 years its gone south.
Country living
Quiet, large parcels of land with mountain views
Relocated to NH from out of state. Wilton was the best option of the housing choices we considered among several towns.
Farmland
It's a peaceful place to be. The river is so tranquil, and the place is completely charming.
Centrally located between Peterborough and Nashua/Amherst. Reasonably priced homes and rural setting.
Job location
Rural without being remote
interesting house in wonderful, historic part of town and yet commutable to work places in Nashua and MA
Work
Waldorf schools
Didn't realize the main street area was so depressed -- straight through from the 101 entry in Milford to the entry off RT31 N. Also, there were no storage units across from the mill and no monstrosity of a fire house where it is now. Finally, the public schools seem to be overshadowed by the Waldorfs, the town divided.
We found the right house after looking for over 2 years.
Quiet and rural.
Location to Milford
Waldorf Schools and Temple Wilton Community Farm
Property availability size and proximity to Boston.
Price. I bought and built low hoping for gentrification.
Tax rate, affordability of homes, and proximity to Manchester/nashua/Boston
Beautiful town
Like it
Because of its rural character but still being within proximity of Nashua and Manchester
Because of the Waldorf Schools.
Property with hilltop view
Waldorf Schools
We found a really inexpensive house we could afford to buy.

Extended family was here
Have lived here all my life - 60 years
Beautiful rural area but easy commute to job in Nashua
It is quiet and friendly
More rural, more affordable, and on the "fringe" of the Route 3 corridor suburban development
Rural environment, historic nature of the Center
Affordable, the people are nice

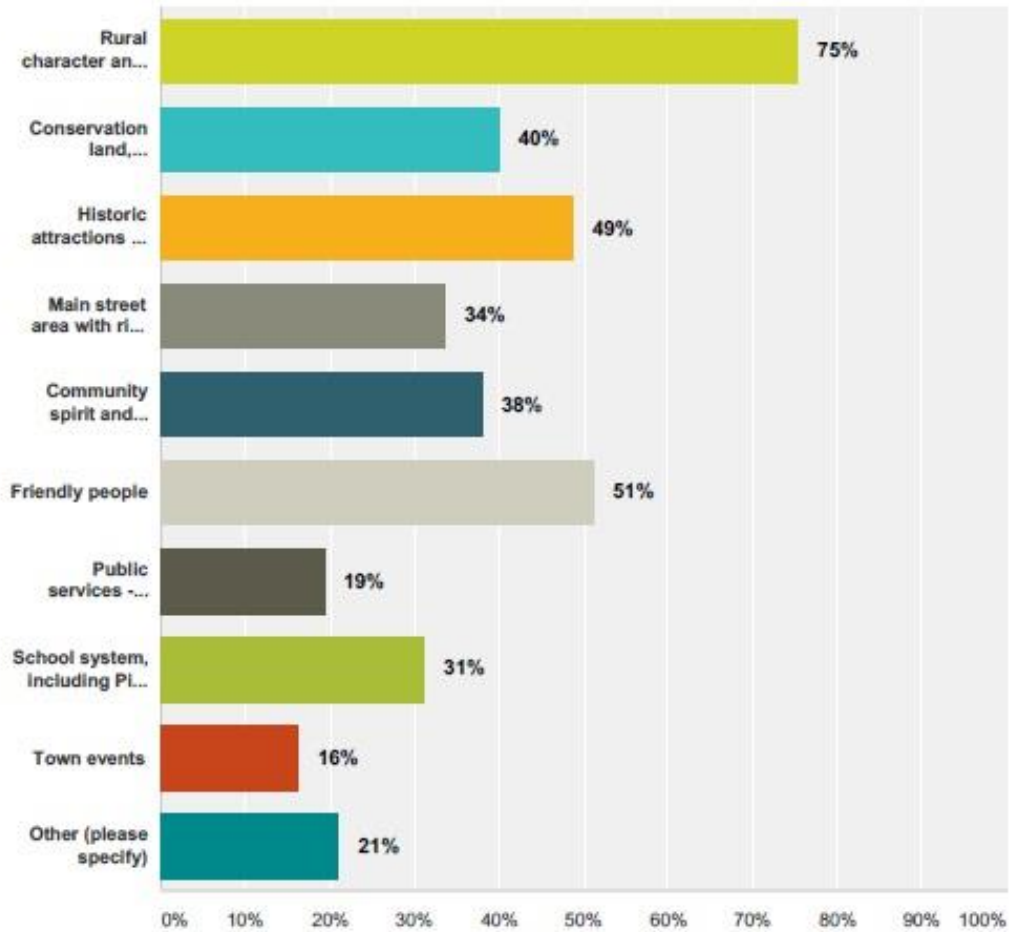
Q5 Who of the following do you think are the most likely to want to live in Wilton?

Answered: 188 Skipped: 3



Q6 Which of the following do you think Wilton can be the MOST proud of?

Answered: 190 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Response
Rural character and small-town charm	75%
Conservation land, recreation opportunities	40%
Historic attractions - Frye's Measure Mill, Andy's Playhouse, Town Hall Theater, etc	49%
Main street area with river and falls	34%
Community spirit and volunteers	38%
Friendly people	51%
Public services - broadband, police and fire departments	19%
School system, including Pine Hill and High Mowing	31%
Town events	16%
Other (please specify)	21%

Q6. Other Responses

Some really nice areas, like old Wilton center, the hill areas, Hilltop Cafe and coop farms

I think it is not appropriate to lump the Wilton high school in with performing quality schools like Pine Hill and High Mowing. The high school is a perennial poor performer, it has been so since I was at MASH in the 70's an my parents owned the Color Shop in Wilton. If you want to attract new and young people to the town the High School needs to be fixed or closed, if closed the kids need to be moved to Conval or Milford. The high school is simply stated an abject failure!

Library should be listed

Wilton Public and Gregg Free Library

The library's collection, services and programs. I'm amazed to see that the library is nowhere mentioned in this survey when it is one of the true centers of community and activity in town.

Our historic, engaged, and ever-evolving library

Amazing and historic library

Wilton Ambulance

The Town Hall Theater and it's philosophy

After recent improvements, the Main St park

Many activities available for all ages - everyone knows everyone else -- or are willing to extend a hand in friendship.

LIBRARY!!

Town hall Theater

Wilton has limits to what it offers. Great movie theater, nice restaurant called Skybridge and local share where a good cup of coffee and friendship exists.

Our local farms including the Temple-Wilton Community Farm on Abbot Hill

Beautiful library

Town events and historic attractions need improved marketing awareness

Progressive sanctuary town - open and welcoming - and let's keep it that way

You need separate broadband (which sucks) from police and fire services (which are awesome)
Farmland the elementary schools are getting better.... would love to see high school improvement to encourage young families and money makers
Proximity to hiking
Library
Artist community
A vibrant, active library.
Wilton needs an upgrade.
Ambulance service
Regarding public services - i would have checked it except that broadband is terrible here
Mr. O'Connell
Putnam's! Dick has always been an integral part of what keeps Wilton going (or limping along as it now is.) He has always supported and promoted any activities that help the town at least survive if not thrive. Please note that the other businesses of which Wilton can be most proud mentioned above, all need community support in order to keep operating or they too will go the way of attractions we once had - The Wilton Scenic Railroad, The Wilton Arts and Film Festival, The Bank (that even hosted art shows that brought people into town and helped raise money to support the placement of awnings over a business a year) and regular art shows in the Town Hall Gallery that had to cease when space was no longer available to store paintings at intake and after the show was taken down. It became unfeasible to hold regular exhibits with professionally framed works due to possible damage to the pieces without a small space to hold them (and the screens for the art shows that were created by the shop class at WLC.) Unfortunately, short-sighted and unimaginative thinking put a halt to most of these things before those who cared and understood what their loss would mean even had a chance to respond to the proposed changes. We need leaders who have a vision and can stand up to entrenched thinking in a positive, growth-ful manner without inciting reactionary rhetoric or conflicts. We need to find ways to help those who have a vision and want to risk starting a business in town as a renter, to work out ways to meet their financial obligations if it is only a matter of a few months' time before they will become solvent. We lost one business because there were no options thought of so it closed and we had one more empty space on Main Street. not bringing in a penny of rent for many, many months. My opinion.
Riverview artist
Exquisite library - as long as it is maintained, as long as its character isn't compromised (as in painting over the murals in the children's department).
Well known movie theater, Nelson's candy
Wilton Town Hall Theater. Cultural Events related to the Anthroposophical Community,
I think Main Street is special...but very run down
I would say Main Street but it still needs more help to revive the appearance and keep its storefronts occupied
Main St. and river fronts could be developed into a tourist attraction, i.e. River Walkway
Awesome Movie Theater
Snowmobile club!
River Walk to be developed
The school system is NOT a selling point

Q7 If you could capture the essence of Wilton in a few words or short phrase, what would it be?

Answered: 130 Skipped: 61

Beautiful Waiting Place Future Quiet Struggling
Charm Cute Community Life
Small Town Village Rural Cares
Quaint Identity New England Mill Town Wilton
Little Peaceful

Q7. If you could capture the essence of Wilton in a few words or short phrase, what would it be?

Answered: 130 Skipped: 61

Potterville like, but without the bank (It's a wonderful Life.)

Peaceful and rural

Traditional modern village with a small-town vibe

"Wilton - a great place to be a fugitive from justice"

Unassuming New England Town

Peaceful marriage of Nature, Community and Art that inspires the youth, honors the community, and protects the historic in a way that makes Wilton the quintessential town to come visit in a way you may never want to leave.

Quaint, rural

Historic charm

Pretty, pleasant, quiet with great, unassuming and very kind people.

Bucolic

Charm

Small town New England

I love Wilton.

Peaceful, low stress

Peterborough-light (a lot of the appeal of Peterborough without the pretension, but less developed arts community etc)

Rural small town

People care

A divided community struggling to come together.

Nice community

A small-town gem

Diverse and community minded

Unique

A community that cares

Wild about Wilton

Cute.

Empire building, departments

A community that values its small town charm

Lots of potential

Dying Main Street

Typical forgotten small town

Rugged, old mill town

Rural quiet area

As small towns go in this country, Wilton, is well above average.
Small Town USA, New England Style
"Gateway to the Monadnock," "Shopping as it used to be" "Something entirely different" "a 19th century mill town" "Where the hills begin" town
Quaint, rural town close to everything
Safe place to raise a family
Be who you want to be; Do what you want to do.
It's getting old
"Wilton -- Where everyone cares to know your name."
A nice small town
Quaint
On your own
A good place to live!
Scenic small town
Friendly small town, lots of nice forests, TH Theater
Small town USA
Quaint, lovely, rural.
Quaint, old school charm, lovely
Six degrees of Richard Putnam
Small town charm
Village
Cute town without much going on except as an occasional speed trap. Overall it is a quaint small town with friendly people. The Waldorf School system is a good selling point but I hear the town needs to do more for them.
Artistic small rural town
A place where everyone knows your name
Hip, happening throwback to small town rural communities
Caring
Evolving.....
A right sized town that is not too big or small
Feels like a community
Nice people
Quaint rural setting to escape the hustle and bustle of everyday. Take a step back in time, enjoy nature's beauty and activities for everyone
It's a nice place to visit but an even better place to live!
A small New England village without a stop light
Beautiful small NH town
Quiet, friendly town with lots of potential to develop small businesses
Unpretentious, friendly, accessible
Life in a small town

Very community oriented
Good fences make good neighbors
A small community and happy to be that way
Farms and fresh air
Home town
Small town life
It makes you feel like you're home.
Charming
A small town with a real small town feel
Small town
Truly a small town with a wonderful community
Beautiful
Peace and quiet. When everybody is finished shooting guns on Sundays.
Struggling
Rural
Waiting to be discovered
Farm life
Secluded and isolated
Quiet and small town friendliness
A town in decline.
Fading but not gone yet
Caring community
Friendly, welcomes creativity, quiet but overall not a viable place for young families/recent graduates
A True Community
Funky, rural beauty and charm, historic and cultural
Charming
The town without an identity
Up and coming
Community minded
A bit tired...
Cute.
Really Good People
Sleepy little town
Quaint, quintessential New England town
Wilton- A Village with Heart and Soul (if the downtown spruces up there will be many more words or phrases to add but right now themes to do with Peacefulness, a Place to call Home come to mind.
Quaint new England village I
Quiet, scenic, outdated downtown
Small town politics

A weeklong weekend
Small town with lots of potential
Small town America.
A grain of sand in an oyster, waiting for the beautiful layers to form (storefronts full of unique, relevant shops and businesses) and make it a pearl.
Struggling to find a positive way to maximize its future potential.
A tragic mix of groups that don't interact well without a compelling identity
Appears to be more of a depressed area on the way down, than a charming little rural town.
Small town charm
Nice, small town, in danger of losing its identity.
Quaint
Authenticity, Simplicity and Charm
Up the hill both ways.
Unfriendly to new business and run by old selectman
Small town, neighborly, not snobby
Friendly, creative community
Peace and quiet
Small friendly town
Charming & friendly
Tiny rural New England town, complete with clock tower
Good small town living
Small rural town but with easy access to everything you need
Stars Hollow from Gilmore Girls
Hanging on to the past, but embracing the future
Rustic, not rusty!

Q8 Please describe an image or picture that best conveys the essence of Wilton.

Answered: 120 Skipped: 71

Frye's Measure Mill Peaceful Woods Waterfall
High Mowing Rural Small Town Country
Library Wilton Center Downtown
Garwin Falls River New England
Main
Town Hall Hilltop Cafe Street
Road Hill Knows Community Theater Trees Past
Water Scene Frye Field Historic

Q8. Please describe an image or picture that best conveys the essence of Wilton.
Answered: 120 Skipped: 71
Potterville
Wilton Center
Downtown - river, falls, Town Hall, Library
Redneck Farm stand on 101 ... or Hilltop Cafe scene/Coop farm, the baby animals
Town Hall
Town hall theatre, carnival Hill
Carnival Hill on the weekends leading up to the Fourth of July. The quaint and peaceful downtown is a close second.
Wilton town hall and church in background of river and falls
Classic New England setting
The roads leading out of town and Putnam's and Pine Hill
Everybody knows your name, in a good way.
Main Street with the Town Hall and clock in the foreground
our main street area including library and river
Andy's Playhouse
Small town community with a supportive, friendly population
Main street along river
People tell me that they come to Wilton for Nelson's Candy and the Town Hall heater.
The Teddy Bear Parade on Main St. (Focus on community activity)
Farmers
One that includes our preservation of the past and our reaching for the future. Perhaps all the people using the library's free Wi-Fi some evening.
Bucolic valley town with farmland around it
The view from Frye Field, High Mowing
A Mill building and water fall
En plein air artist at work
The forest
Open ATM
A mill building on a stream with trees in the background
The downtown strip
Not enough people who care
Typical forgotten small town
Scrappy, unpretentious, creative, hardworking and the citizens should be proud of that.
In truth nothing comes to mind
Can't at the moment.

The railroad trestle over the Souhegan River
The road that curves down from 101 to the river and the historic buildings on Main St., the Town Hall, the town park, the hills to the north, King Brook Road
Views from High Mowing fields
Small town
Garwin Falls
Main Street Park in Winter/ Farmlands in Summer/ Dried leaves swirling around clock tower in Autumn
Town Hall Theatre
New England in the Fall
Out of the mainstream
Historic home
The view from Rt 101
Church & Library buildings
Country living
The downtown area, or the Souhegan
I love downtown Wilton, small & unique
Kids walking home from school
Open land where everyone knows one another
Sleepy town trying to wake up.
Charming rural mill town
Stoney Brook and Souhegan River confluence under bridge
There is none...this survey is a good first step.
The view from the top of Frye Field looking west
The Sister March in the little park with hopeful messages hung on the tree
Small town and nature nearby
Too many to choose just one
Peaceful, calm and comfortable.
Main Street
The view of the library from the police station
Downtown with waterfalls and historic town hall.
Town Hall clock tower
The Fire department hanging the Christmas decorations in Main St. on Thanksgiving weekend, 2. Old Home Days on the Flat.
Coming down off of Burns Hill Rd. looking left to the PD, church, and library. Or Carnival Hill
The Town Hall and Town Hall Theater
I can't think of a nice one
Rural living
Main Street
River

The view from the field next to high mowing.
Souhegan River
The water rushes down the river as a deer walls along the edge.
No illegal immigrants roaming around.
Town hall
Bikers (too many)
Tired. Economically stagnant.
Downtown
Run down houses seen from Rt 101
Main street
Frye's Measure Mill
Interesting arts scene/but really difficult for many people to afford to live here
A view of the downtown during summer or fall
Hilltop Cafe and surrounding woods and hills
Community
Wilton Theater
The river/forests
Beautiful back road views
A waterfall
Downtown strip
Wilton Town Hall
Waterfall in the background, some woods, a pond with turtles on a log, horses grazing.
Downtown.
Rustic
Bickering hillbillies and alcoholics
The railroad bridge over the river and the falls amidst autumn trees
I love the overhead calendar picture of downtown
Empty store fronts and lack of enthusiasm in the recent past. What happened? There was an enthusiastic core of people who worked to revitalize this town and then sour feelings allowed our main street to feature private dwellings instead of businesses! That should NEVER have passed our planning or zoning boards!
The ugly house at the wrong end of Main st
Boring Main Street flanked by decrepit housing and other eyesores. Oh, then there is the outrageous downgrade of a helter-skelter junk store on the west end of the street...
Woods
Frye's Measure Mill, river views.
Quiet country town
Abbot Hill Community, Wilton Center
WMSA logo
Flags over main street. Good vet atmosphere.

Library, town hall, fries measure mill, sunsets from Frye field and Pead hill, and Garwin falls are my favorite images
The Town Hall building with a river flowing next to it. Would be even better if eventually we developed a River Walk with plantings and shops and cafe opening onto the river side. Then the image could include this in some way.
People helping people
Main Street
Main Street Park developed by volunteers
Town hall building (with theatre and clock tower)
The Town Hall
Downtown river and falls
Mills and water
Community
A hemlock tree
The Main Street Park

Q9. Please add anything further you think would help us in developing an image for Wilton that could help us improve the marketing of our town.

Answered: 95 Skipped: 96

Sat Disney matinee at theater

Lots of small farming, local produce, artisan breads... the whole crunchy vibe is an existing strength

I'd be nice to see some more open support for green and environmental initiatives. Getting nailed on my property tax because I put solar on my home wasn't cool.

<https://www.nh.gov/oep/energy/saving-energy/incentives.htm>

I think there is opportunity to create two distinct vibes of Wilton Downtown and Old Wilton Center that creates a larger identity of what Wilton has to offer. The Old Wilton Center having Isaac Frye Mill, The Red House and Church (along with their activities) and Andy's Summer Playhouse alongside the up-and-coming Sereni-Tea and potential Bed and Breakfast...Along with the hike to the Falls... matched with a lively downtown with movie theater, cafes and parades... By placing two distinct identities to this great town, we could really create a robust look at how Wilton is marrying the old and historic with new and innovative, creating a unique New England experience for all walks of life.

Clean downtown up to be more welcoming

Clean up Main Street... help struggling business improve store fronts to make it more appealing

Downtown Wilton needs a face lift to take advantage of the river frontage for the buildings and mill settings this will of course take a master plan with development funds that of course needs to be developed. Walkways on back sides with seating would be a major transformation, of course lots of capital investment will be required, it is not likely going to come from the state or local taxes but done by a developer who will make money when it's done.

The Town Hall theater is the only draw down town and it needs to be capitalized upon to draw additional retail and restaurant business into town. The conversion of retail space down town into residential and church spaces is not a step in the right direction for revitalizing down town. Albeit said that the work being done on the old Roam Cafe looks to be quality and an improvement to the image of down town.

The taxes are going to make us move when we retire. We get limited to no services. They doubled right after we moved here. We even pay for our own water and trash pick up. And how many bays are there in the fire department?

Improve the walkability of the main street area to connect some of the spaces better and include walk along the river behind the shops

The low-key, unpretentious, liberal, art-influenced vibe combined with a traditional rural New England farming vibe makes Wilton special. I would love to see us appeal to religious and racially diverse groups. We are an economically diverse town, but not so much culturally/racially. Our elementary schools (FRES, Pine Hill) are exceptional, so we are a great starter-location for young families.

Great library

Because of the Waldorf system, Wilton has a variety of people not found in other towns of its size.

Focus on people, not just buildings. An event, something that shows participation.

Open land/hills with the town hall clock tower appearing to one side, to show both our beautiful

landscape and our community spirit
We have an amazing library!
We need to do more and have less restrictions to attract new businesses
More accessible parking
For me, the distinguishing characteristic of Wilton is its three part population: the old families who have been here for generations, the high tech folks who moved in through the '80s and '90s, and the arts and agriculture folks associated with the Waldorf schools, studios, and community farms.
Wilton has a lot of great points, but it feels like a town divided against itself. There are those who are "Old Wilton," who have lived here forever, and are ideologically very different from the High Mowing Community. Greater effort needs to be made toward the visibility of neutral activities, such as Summerfest.
A town that has it all - residences, businesses, industry
Need to work together better
Buy the full length of "Main Street" from Milford and get some sort of night life.
It's aging and needs things to attract young people and things for the youngsters to do
A park with a playground where families could gather, picnic and children could play
Those who know me understand that I am skeptical about such endeavors. But, I like some of the ideas. Be glad to discuss all of this with anyone interested. This survey is not the forum for that.
Wilton is comprised of multiple villages/neighborhoods, each with its own personality. That translates into something that could appeal to everyone.
Improve the signs on 101 to encourage people to enter the town opposite Abbott Hill Rd. No there's nothing except the signs for the Waldorf schools.
Encouraging more spaces for artists to live and work that are affordable.
Attracting businesses along 101, not more retail like Milford and Amherst
Senior center, Nashua too far to travel for elders
We need a town pub!
PLEASE! KEEP IT SMALL AND QUAIN. I don't want busloads of newcomers & new housing developments. This will NOT aid the tax base - it will put extra demands on it.
An individualistic small town is better than the sameness of suburban USA
Update
Nice landscaping along rail line east of station
simple life in not so simple times
We need an upscale pub/restaurant
Its vacation history - it was a place that people came to vacation a long time ago
Need to make Main Street a place to come to. Better eateries, small grocery shop, more stores....less little junk shops and flea market style run down store.
Wilton has a supportive local community
A consistent and accurate on-line presence for retail shopping, arts, restaurants, history.
Need to do better litter clean up in surrounding area
AT LEAST PAVE THE MAIN STREET ROAD
Accepting of immigrants as noted by the passed articles at town mtg.

Images that will combine the community history with nature's treasures. Town needs to be more receptive and open to business ideas.
You seem to be working so hard to develop Main Street for businesses and yet the old cafe was allowed to be turned into residence(s). Why??? That was a disservice to the entire downtown community. Perhaps some zoning would prevent that from happening again. The unfortunate 1960's added facade of the post office needs to be removed and returned to its original facade. We would then have a charming post office like most other small towns in NH. It is a shame ours is such an eye sore. Renovated it would look something like the charming brick building on the corner of the oval in Milford where the Verizon store is. Why have Meehan Builders been allowed to make the old train station building (next to the florist) to look like a junk yard; it gets junkier by the year. Main Street has the potential to be so charming, but if we want to get businesses to move to downtown and bring people and tourist in to downtown we need to remove/renovate these eye sores and prevent others from popping up. New England downtowns are known for their charm- and if we are competing with Peterborough and Milford then we need to step up our game.
We need to develop accessibility to the water with a beautiful nature walk along the river behind the businesses on main street
Historic character - a microcosm of NH's development from agricultural to small-town industrial.
It's the schools. It's all about the schools and always will be. Wilton schools have a poor reputation and culture
I don't believe in "marketing" Wilton. I don't want to be overrun with tourists, grocery stores, or big chain businesses of any kind. I'm perfectly happy to not have a stop light in town. Our little traffic issues are fine...everyone in our community going about their days together. Anything we need can be found in Milford, Amherst, and Peterborough. I'm happy to let them be over built. I don't see a need to 'develop an image' of Wilton. We already have one.
We need less cantankerous folk and more smiling faces! We have not found Wilton to be very friendly to new folks.
Wilton needs to change not just think about branding. I suggest using the name Naturally Wilton and targeting businesses that go with that
The river walk would be a beautiful, unique addition to Wilton.
Focus on the arts
A community of outdoors people, farmers, artists and families.
Take down the residential housing as you enter Wilton. It's a poor first sight as you enter the town. often I hear
Life in Wilton can be whatever you want. Slow your life down, going fishing with your kids, walk through downtown and get greeted by your neighbors. This town has the strongest sense of community that I've ever seen. People in this town are so quick to support in-town businesses if their neighbor is needed. It's a wonderful refreshing change. We love Wilton and I love my neighbors.
Don't ruin it by over development and attracting the Boston-Lowell over through.
Farm to Table, Natural Charm, Community.
Need something to make Wilton a destination rather than a drive-by.
Small town feel
Brightly colored buildings, parking, better advertisement of movie house and the few shops there now

Advertise events more and have more events (like Old Home Days more often). I never know what's going on because things are barely advertised. It would be nice if there was more to do around here, not just for school aged kids.
Towns are defined by successful unique businesses. Need to encourage something unique to come to town. Main street. has a number of empty buildings that's a problem.
Zone downtown so no one can turn a restaurant into a house
work force housing; continue to support and PUBLIZE the Blue Bus
The downtown needs to add more businesses. A coffee shop / bookstore would be an amazing hangout!
Get the idea across to the zoning board and planning board that business is good for a small town they help to tax rates down and i know it's too late now but the police and fire should not have built two standalone buildings in the downtown area they should have built across from Monadnock Water on 101
School system needs to improve to attract younger generation having kids. If it has improved - someone needs to promote the improvements.
Higher learning
Large amount of commercial land available for development on major East-West highway in Southern NH
More emphasis on Wilton Center and how charming it is. We live there and most people don't know it's there. Yes there is a sign on 101 but people go past it and most have no idea how charming ole New England it is. Maybe a picture near the sign. Also many don't know what Wilton consists of, if there is a way to bring it together so it flows and doesn't feel so disjointed. A better sign for West Wilton. A much better entryway to Downtown on 101. A sign on Burns Hill Road from Isaac Frye area that tells you where downtown is located. Charming signs not tacky. I love Hilltop for breakfasts but downtown we really need restaurants that have a larger menu and are really appealing to go to. Better flow, greater sense of community. Even living here it feels disjointed. Signs for Garwin falls and other water holes and trails. Unless you have lived here for a while everything is so hard to find.
Opportunities galore
Try to get updates out for any extensive internet reference to Wilton. (I found something under 'Discover Monadnock' that was really out of date.
I think the town folk need to be more welcoming.
While I think it's important to draw new business into town (I love the idea of a new bookstore, grocery, or inn), I also think it's important to prevent Wilton from being as congested as Milford. Definitely want to still keep our property taxes low!
Growth is good but keep it within the limits of maintaining the small town feeling. Congestion will detract from the quaintness of Wilton.
The town needs to be marketed to entrepreneurs. If Wilton was a tiny jewel off 101, people would stop and stroll.
Need more foot traffic
We need to focus on what could bring young families into town and then on ways to keep them here to give the town a sense of vitality and growth.

There needs to be a compelling vision for the town that people all buy into. There needs to be a friendly and open attitude towards new businesses that supports said vision. There needs to be some serious cultural investment
Close down the junk store, as a starter. I was in there once and could not believe, not only the filth, but the number of violations and hazards that were overlooked (by the town). Why did they get permission to open shop there, when other businesses that would have enhanced Wilton, were discouraged by town policies? And, why are not landlords held to a higher standard of building maintenance?
Encourage eclectic downtown shops, protect open space and conservation, establish a low impact river trail system, and reestablish an arts/music/film festival.
Relocate Attic Finds. Looks terrible and has degraded Main St
Wilton needs a vital art scene, over the years I have seen regions transform by making work/live loft space available at affordable rates to creative human beings. Something along these lines would breathe life into our community.
Need more citizens coming to Town Meeting. I think there should be a disadvantages option in this list.
Broadband internet awesome
I think the ideas for downtown and the new river walk are great. Helping the downtown and storefronts so it doesn't appear run down and closed up will improve the quaintness and life to our town. Hopefully buildings like the Attic Finds will get a much needed facelift and pull the building in the direction of matching the other historic buildings in town. I think if we can make our downtown more appealing in a quaint and historic way it will draw in new people and businesses
Clean up the river front and make it an attraction for businesses and leisure.
More events
Have all the stores open at the same time.
Improve the school system
Don't try to "out Milford Milford." Keep the simplicity of our town.
More unique, small-town events